



إِنَّ الدِّينَ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ الْإِسْلَامُ

THE MUSLIM SUNRISE

FIRST QUARTER 1987

In This Issue:

The Power of Prayer
The Revival of Islam
How I Captured the Truth
Cultural Mix in Islam
Truth is One: Paths Are Many
Muslim Contribution to Science
Westernization and Islam

EDITORIAL STAFF

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THE AHMADIYYA MOVEMENT IN ISLAM

The Ahmadiyya Movement was founded in 1889 by Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, the expected world Reformer and the Promised Messiah. The Movement is an embodiment of true and real Islam. It seeks to unite mankind with its Creator and to establish peace throughout the world. The present Supreme Head of the Movement is Hazrat Mirza Tahir Ahmad. The International Center for the Ahmadiyya Movement is at Rabwah, Pakistan. The Ahmadiyya Movement is actively engaged in the propagation of Islam.

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بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

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***Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, The Promised Messiah
Founder of the Ahmadiyya Movement in Islam (1835-1908)***

Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad was born in 1835 in Qadian, a small village in India, lacking all facilities for communication with the rest of the world. He received very little formal education but was richly endowed with knowledge by the Almighty and wrote more than 80 books which are a treasurehouse of knowledge and divine light.

In March, 1889, he laid the foundation of the Ahmadiyya Movement in Islam when he proclaimed to be the Promised Messiah, the expected Reformer of the age. This Movement was inaugurated to revive faith in God and to collect under one banner all the true lovers of peace and to inculcate among them the spirit of tolerance, good will, and true brotherhood.

He passed away in 1908 and the Ahmadiyya Movement has since been guided by his successors chosen by an electoral college. The present Head of the Movement is Sahibzada Mirza Tahir Ahmad. The International Headquarters are located in Rabwah, Pakistan.

CONDITIONS OF "BAI'AT" (INITIATION) INTO THE AHMADIYYA MOVEMENT IN ISLAM

- I. The initiate shall solemnly promise that he/she shall abstain from *Shirk* (association of any partner with God) right upto the day of his/her death.
- II. That he/she shall keep away from falsehood, fornication, adultery, trespasses of the eye, debauchery, dissipation, cruelty, dishonesty, mischief and rebellion; and will never be carried away by passions, however strong they may be.
- III. That he/she shall regularly offer the five daily prayers in accordance with the commandments of God and the Holy Prophet; and shall try his/her best to be regular in offering the *Tahajjud* (pre-dawn supererogatory prayers) and invoking *Darood* (blessings) on the Holy Prophet; that he/she shall make it his/her daily routine to ask forgiveness for his/her sins, to remember the bounties of God and to praise and glorify Him.
- IV. That under the impulse of any passions, he/she shall cause no harm whatsoever to the creatures of Allah in general, and Muslims in particular, neither by his/her tongue nor by his/her hands nor by any other means.
- V. That he/she shall remain faithful to God in all circumstances of life, in sorrow and happiness, adversity and prosperity, in felicity and trials; and shall in all conditions remain resigned to the decree of Allah and keep himself ready to face all kinds of indignities and sufferings in His way and shall never turn away from it at the onslaught of any misfortune; rather, he/she shall always march forward.
- VI. That he/she shall refrain from following un-Islamic customs and lustful inclinations, and shall completely submit himself to the authority of the Holy Quran; and shall make the word of God and the sayings of the Holy Prophet the guiding principles in every walk of life.
- VII. That he/she shall entirely give up pride and vanity and shall pass all his/her life in lowliness, humbleness, cheerfulness, forbearance and meekness.
- VIII. That he/she shall hold faith, the honor of faith, and the cause of Islam dearer to him than his life, wealth, honor, children and all other dear ones.
- IX. That he/she shall keep himself occupied in the service of God's creatures, for His sake only; and shall endeavor to benefit mankind to the best of his/her God-given abilities and powers.
- X. That he/she shall enter into a bond of brotherhood with this humble servant of God (the Promised Messiah), pledging obedience to him in everything good, for the sake of Allah, and remain faithful to it till the day of his/her death; that he/she shall exert such a high devotion in the observance of this bond as is not to be found in any other worldly relationship and connections demanding devoted dutifulness.

You may also join the fold of Ahmadiyyat by accepting the above conditions of initiation.

THE MUSLIM SUNRISE

**A Journal of the Islamic
Renaissance in America**

The Muslim Sunrise is a quarterly magazine, founded in 1921 by Dr. Mufti Muhammad Sadiq, the first Muslim missionary in the U.S.A. The magazine is an organ of the Ahmadiyya Movement in Islam, founded by Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad of Qadian, India (1835-1908). The Movement is currently headed by Hazrat Mirza Tahir Ahmad—fourth successor—with Headquarters at Rabwah, Pakistan. The Movement aims at presenting to the world the true meaning and teachings of Islam. The American Headquarters of the Movement are located at the Fazl Mosque, 2141 Leroy Place, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20008.

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THE POWER OF PRAYER

(Masud Ahmad Qazi, M.D., Streamwood, IL)

What is Prayer? Prayer is nothing but communication with God Almighty. Prayer is our link and our bond with our Creator. Prayer teaches humility and inculcates submissiveness. It purifies the soul and cleanses the spirit. For a *momin* or a true believer, it is a means of achieving perfect union with the Almighty; obtaining perfect contentment and perfect submission. It is an uplifting and exhilarating experience for a pious servant of the Almighty God. It fosters a keen insight and true understanding of our glorious God. Sincere and true prayer sears the soul and ignites the spirit. The Promised Messiah has called it a form of death and said:

“When prayer is offered in great tribulation so that the soul melts and flows at the threshold of the Divine, that is true prayer and it is God’s way that when such a prayer is offered, He accepts it or responds to it in some other manner.”

Worship is mentioned in the Holy Quran 152 times, bowing 15 times, prostration 74 times, and prayer 99 times. Thus, the Holy Quran has placed tremendous emphasis on the significance of prayer. God Almighty says in the Holy Quran:

وَإِذَا سَأَلَكَ عِبَادِي عَنِّي فَإِنِّي قَرِيبٌ أَجِيبْ دَعْوَةَ الدَّاعِ
إِذَا دَعَا ۚ فَلْيَسْتَجِيبُوا لِي وَلْيُؤْمِنُوا بِلَعَلِّهِمْ يَرْشُدُونَ

“And when my servants ask thee about Me, say I am near. I answer the prayer of a suppliant when he prays to Me so they should harken to Me and believe in Me, that they may follow the right way”. (2:187)

God also declares:

ادْعُونِي أَسْتَجِبْ لَكُمْ

“Call on me, I shall respond to you.” (40:61)

Duaa is an integral and essential part of *Ibadat* which is itself closely connected with *Abudiyyat*. The Holy Quran claims that the very purpose of man’s creation is *Ibadat* or worship. Thus it follows that prayer is the very essence of worship and the hallmark of a true servant of God. God’s attribute of *Rahimiyyat* demands that we pray to Him to attract His mercy and clemency. From *Sura*

Fatiha to *An-Naas*, the Quran constantly exhorts us to pray. We recite:

إِهْدِنَا الصِّرَاطَ الْمُسْتَقِيمَ

"O, Allah guide us along the right path"

in our five daily prayers. And before that

*"Thee alone do we worship and
Thee alone do we implore for help."*

It tells us to remember the Greatness, the Glory and absolute Power of God and also our utter helplessness and humility.

A true worshipper knows these two essential requirements of prayer. Firstly, that the Almighty God has the power to foster and to develop and bestow mercy and reward. Secondly, that man can achieve nothing without the help and support of the Divine. Once these two concepts are firmly rooted and deeply ingrained in the heart of a worshipper, his heart melts, all arrogance and pride is washed away and at last a spiritual stage arrives that concern for himself and the world surrounding him leaves him instead in such a state of selflessness that he is totally lost and immersed in the love of God. This condition is called the straight path (الصِّرَاطَ الْمُسْتَقِيمَ) by God, which a servant has been instructed to seek through the supplication, (إِهْدِنَا الصِّرَاطَ الْمُسْتَقِيمَ) which is to say that, bestow upon us the path of losing of self in the Unity of God and love of God (which has been indicated in the previous verses) and cut us asunder from everything beside Thee.

Among the numerous blessings of Ahmadiyyat is the belief in prayer and our re-introduction to a Living God and a Living faith. With the generalized and widespread decay and deterioration among Muslims and their moral and spiritual debasement, they were deprived of the numerous blessings of a Living faith. Among the many nefarious beliefs which took root was the conviction that God Almighty does not speak anymore to anyone, as if He was no longer *Samee*, *Kaleem* and *Khabeer*. That prayer is useless since destiny or *Taqdeer* is pre-determined and therefore prayer will not and cannot influence anything. Sir Syed Ahmed Khan, who was a great scholar and educationist, was one of the main spokesmen for this ideology.

This view was most forcefully and emphatically rejected by Hazrat Ahmad, The Promised Messiah. He wrote volumes about prayer and its true significance. Particularly in the celebrated book,

Barakaatud Duaa, he beautifully expounded the philosophy of prayer and decimated the false arguments and statements put forward by Sir Syed Ahmed Khan. He declared:

“Our Ever Living and All Sustaining God talks to me like one person talks to another. I ask Him something and supplicate to Him, and He answers in words full of power. If this should happen a thousand times, He does not fail to answer. In His words, He discloses wonderful hidden matters and displays scenes of extraordinary powers till He makes it clear that He alone is the One who should be called God. He accepts prayers and intimates their acceptance. He resolves great difficulties and through repeated supplications revives those who are sick unto death. He discloses all these designs of His in advance, through His words which relate to future events. He proves that He is the God of heaven and earth. He addressed me and told me that He would safeguard me against death by plague and all those who dwell in my house in piety and righteousness. Who else is there in this age except myself who has published such a revelation and disclosed God’s promise concerning the members of his family and other pious people who dwell within his house.”

The real benefit of prayer is the patience, endurance and steadfastness which God bestows upon the yearning heart of a true believer. Ultimately his heart is filled with the redolent fragrance of the Love of God. Spiritual elevation and exaltation follows and an irrevocable bond develops between God Almighty and his true servant. The conditions for the acceptance of prayer include eagerness, steadfastness, purity, truthfulness, perfect certainty, perfect love, and perfect attention. Also the objective should not be contrary to the Divine design for the welfare in this world and in the Hereafter if the supplicant is for whom supplication is being offered. One should not and cannot expect or demand instantaneous results either. There may be delays with the inherent benefit of strengthening the resolve, the courage and the understanding of the true believer. And yes there are trials.

“It may be that you dislike a thing which is good for you and it may be that you like a thing which is bad for you. Allah knows and you know not”

God Almighty surely tests us with trials.

"And We will try you with something of fear and hunger and loss of wealth, and lives and fruits but give glad tidings to those who patiently persevere. Who when a misfortune overtakes them say 'surely to Allah we belong and to Him we shall return'." (2:156-157)

And before this God says:

"O Ye who believe seek help through perseverance and prayer surely Allah is with those who patiently persevere." (2:154)

So it is clear that at times God Almighty accepts the prayers but enforces His Will and His authority and Divine Decree, for He is the All Powerful, the Master of all the worlds and His Will prevails. A true believer accepts the Will of God cheerfully, shows fortitude, courage and steadfastness and God says give glad tidings to the "steadfast".

Thus prayer is a means by which the power of God is manifested, the august Majesty and absolute Power of the Almighty reveals itself. From time immemorial, prayer has caused miracles to happen, Abraham remaining unharmed, unscratched in the pit of fire, Noah was saved from the great deluge, Lot and Jonah were protected. Jesus Christ was delivered from the cross. And our Holy Prophet eventually was victorious and triumphant. Hazrat Ahmad also majestically manifested the power of prayer. It was his prayer that destroyed Pandit Lekhram and Alexander Dowie and so many others with all their arrogance and conceit. God also bestowed upon his true companions and followers the blessing of acceptance of prayer. Thousands of signs were shown by his illustrious companions and followers. And once again, the world was awe-struck and dumbfounded by the power of prayer and the power of the living God and the living Prophet and Living Faith of Islam.

Today, it is only through Ahmadiyyat or the true Islam that this power of God Almighty, the God of Mohammad and the God of Ahmad, is manifested in its full glory and majesty. Who among us can deny the miracles of prayer and can refute the magnificent Glory and Power of Allah, the All Powerful and All Sustaining.

I bear personal witness that Allah continually showered his blessings on my father just like he did on numerous others. They were all blessed with this Divine gift of acceptance of prayer. God had

promised my father **إِنَّ اللَّهَ يُفْعِلُ مَا يَشَاءُ**, a promise with the Holy Prophet which had been fulfilled numerous times in the past that God will protect you against the people, and he was protected. A sworn enemy of Ahmadiyyat came up behind him one day in the street, pulled out a loaded gun and started firing. The bullet got stuck in the barrel of the gun and no matter how much he tried it would neither go forward nor could it be ejected. My father disarmed him quickly and handed him over to the police. And once again the world witnessed a mighty sign of Hazrat Ahmad:

آگ ہماری غلام بلکہ ہمارے غلاموں کی بھی غلام ہے

“Fire is my Servant, Rather a Servant of my Servants.”

In conclusion, I want to quote one or two passages of Hazrat Ahmad which reflect his keen insight and true love of God and Muhammad.

“Blessed are the prisoners who supplicate and do not get tired, for they shall one day be released; blessed are the blind ones who persevere in their prayers, for one day they shall see. Blessed are those who are in the graves and seek the help of God through supplication, for one day they shall be taken out of their graves. Blessed are you who do not get tired in your prayers and your souls melt while you pray and your eyes shed tears and a fire is lit in your breasts and you are driven into dark chambers and wild forests, seeking solitude and you are rendered restless and mad and unconscious of self, for in the end you will become the recipients of grace. The God on whom we call, is very benevolent and Merciful and Modest and True and Faithful and Compassionate to those who are humble. You should also become faithful and supplicate with full sincerity and loyalty so that He should have mercy on you. Withdraw from the tumult of the world and do not make your faith a matter of personal contention. Accept defeat for the sake of God so that you might become heirs to great victories. God will show a miracle to those who pray and will bestow extraordinary favors upon those who beg. Prayer comes from God and returns to Him through prayer. God comes close to you as your life is close to you.

“In short, prayer is that sovereign remedy which converts a handful of dust into precious metal. It is the water that washes out inner impurities. With prayer the soul melts and,

flowing like water, falls at the threshold of the Divine. It stands before God and bows down before Him so that the *Salat* that Islam teaches becomes its reflection. The standing of the soul in prayer is that it is prepared to endure every misfortune for the sake of God and is eager to carry out His commands, and its bowing down means that discarding all other loves and relationships, it leans towards God and becomes His, and its prostration is that falling at the threshold of God, it loses itself altogether and wipes out its own being. This is the *Salat* which brings about a meeting between God and the worshipper.

“The sign of a true religion is that through its teaching such righteous ones should continue to arise who should arrive at the state of a *Muhaddas*, to whom God Almighty should speak face to face. The foremost sign of the truth of Islam is that all through, it produces such righteous ones with whom God Almighty talks, as it is said in the Holy Quran:

تَنْزِيلٌ عَلَيْهِمُ الْمَلَكَةُ الْأَتَقَاتُ وَلَا تَحْزَنُوا

“Angles descend upon them reassuring them,
fear not, nor grieve.” (41:31)

“This is the test of a true, living and acceptable religion. We know that this light is to be found only in Islam and that the Christian Faith is without such light.

“We can furnish conclusive proof to every seeker after truth that from the time of our lord and master, the Holy Prophet (peace be upon him) up to day, in every century, there have appeared men of God through whom God Almighty has guided other people by the display of heavenly signs. Of these were Syed Abdul Qadir Jilani, Abul Hasan Harqani, Abu Yazid Bustami, etc.

“Their number exceeded thousands and so many extraordinary happenings concerning them are set out in the books of the learned ones that even a very bigoted opponent has to admit that these people manifested extraordinary signs and miracles. I tell you truly that through my research, so far as it is possible for one to discover about the past, I have

(continued on page 14)

THE REVIVAL OF ISLAM

(Dr. Aziz A. Chaudhry, St. Louis, MO)

The Holy Prophet had prophesied that after earlier glorious successes the condition of Muslims would decline. He had foretold that at the time of *Mahdi* and Messiah, nothing would be left of Islam but its name and nothing would be left of the Quran but its words. He predicted that Muslims would fall into decline and would become divided among themselves.

All this has happened as foretold by the Prophet. The function of *Mahdi* and Messiah was reformation of Muslims and revival of Islam. He was to act as a judge and a guide for Muslims to remove their misunderstandings and misconceptions about Islam and to remove their divisions and unify them. This function was adequately performed by Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, the Promised Messiah. He generated in the heart of Muslims, a deep love and honor for the Quran and the Holy Prophet Muhammad (peace be on him). He created a firm faith and reliance upon God. By stressing upon prayers and supplications to Allah, he inculcated the spirit of establishing personal relationship with the Creator. Acting as a wise judge and guide he solved their disputes and doctrinal errors. Some of these may be mentioned here.

At the time of the advent of The Promised Messiah, one great misconception current among Muslim divines was that a large number of verses of the Holy Quran, according to some as many as six hundred, had been abrogated by verses subsequently revealed. This was a great error which destroyed the reliability of the Holy Quran. The Promised Messiah rejected this notion completely and explained that it was based upon a totally erroneous interpretation of some of the verses of the Holy Quran. He emphasized that not a single letter from the Holy Quran can be abrogated.

With respect to the Quran and the *Hadees* (sayings of the Prophet), Muslims were divided into two groups. One, considering the Quran to be basic and fundamental sought to reject the *Hadees* altogether, calling it unreliable and unauthentic. The other group attached so much importance to the *Hadees* that they

tended to subordinate the Quran to it.

The Promised Messiah rejected both these extreme positions and taught that the Holy Quran was fundamental and supreme and the *Hadees* was a very useful guidance and a source of light for the understanding of the Holy Quran. Any *Hadees* which clearly contradicted the Holy Quran is to be rejected as unauthentic because the Holy Prophet could not have contradicted the Quran. *Sunnah* (the practice of Holy Prophet) was binding upon Muslims and had a position superior to the *Hadees*.

Another doctrine which held sway among Muslims at the time of the Promised Messiah was that force could be used to propagate Islam and they referred to it as a doctrine of *Jihad*. This was also a dangerous and most erroneous misconception of the word *Jihad* in the Holy Quran which means striving in the way of Allah with our lives and resources. This doctrine of *Jihad* tended to destroy the freedom of conscience which Islam upholds. The Holy Quran proclaims:

"There shall be no compulsion in religion, for guidance and error have been already distinguished." (2:57)

Again it says:

"Proclaim, this is the truth from your Lord, then let him who will, believe and let him who will, disbelieve." (18:30)

Islam allows fighting only in self-defence, like the example of the Holy Prophet. After he was forced to migrate to Medina, the Arab tribes sought to destroy the early community of Islam. Fighting in self-defense or for establishing freedom of professing religion is only one form of *Jihad*. A greater *Jihad*, according to the Holy Prophet, is to control one's ego and strive in the way of Allah like offering prayers.

At the time of Hazrat Ahmad, many Muslim sects were expecting a bloody *Mahdi* and Messiah who were to fight with non-Muslims and convert them to Islam at the point of a sword. In other words, such *Mahdi* and Messiah were to fill the world with blood and violence. This belief was based on wrong and literal interpretation of some of the metaphorical words in the *Hadees*. Hazrat Ahmad exposed the errors of this idea and declared it to be utterly un-Islamic. He claimed to be Mahdi and Messiah but proclaimed that his mission was to propagate Islam with love,

forgiveness, peace, and prayers. He was not to indulge in any war and violence and had no political ambitions. Thus Hazrat Ahmad removed dangerous misunderstandings about the concept of *Jihad*.

These are just a few illustrations of the great work of Renaissance of Islam by the Promised Messiah. In his voluminous books, lectures and records of his public conversations, he based everything on the Holy Quran and practices and sayings of the Holy Prophet. In all these he has provided a detailed commentary of the Holy Quran and set out a moral and spiritual guidance which this era needs. Out of His grace, Allah bestowed upon him a profound and comprehensive knowledge of the Holy Quran. He was a champion of Islam who defended Islam successfully against the attacks by its opponents and established the superiority of Islam over all other religions.

He removed the innovations which were against the spirit of Islam. He stressed upon the pure Unity of God as taught by the Quran and condemned wrong practices like glorification of saints and making offerings and supplications to them. In today's materialistic world, people put all their reliance upon the means to a desired aim. The Promised Messiah stressed upon the habit of prayer and putting reliance on God alone as he explained that all the laws of nature and all means have been created by God Himself. He taught that material means must be used but ultimate reliance should not be placed on them alone.

The Promised Messiah succeeded in the revival of Islam and establishing a community which is the most dynamic part of Muslims today and which is daily engaged in upholding the honor of Islam and propagating it in all continents.

GOD GIVEN KNOWLEDGE

Arabic is the language of the Quran. For perfect understanding and propagation of the Quran, adequate knowledge of Arabic is essential. Hazrat Ahmad had no formal education in Arabic in any school. To begin with, his knowledge of this language was elementary. However, after God selected him as a reformer—a *Mahdi* and Messiah, he was blessed with extraordinary and miraculous knowledge of Arabic. He claimed that Allah invested him with the knowledge of forty thousand important roots of

Arabic through divine revelation in a single night. This was no empty boast. Subsequently he wrote a score of books in Arabic including *Karamatus Sadiqeen*, *Noor-ul-Haq*, *Khutba Ilhamia*, etc., and challenged Muslim religious scholars of India and Arabia to compete with him in producing religious literature in Arabic of equal literary excellence and richness in meaning. None among his opponents dared to take up the challenge and they were all silenced. He claimed that Allah the Gracious had blessed him with extraordinary and miraculous knowledge of the Holy Quran and the Arabic language. He also challenged his opponents to compete with him in writing a commentary in Arabic of any selected verses of Holy Quran. Scholars from Arab countries were also invited. No one dared to accept the challenge.



(The Power of Prayer—continued from page 10)

come to the conclusion that the number of heavenly signs in support of Islam and as a testimony of the truth of the Holy Prophet, which have been manifested through the *Aulia* of this *Ummat* is not to be equalled in the history of other religions. Islam is the only religion which has progressed through heavenly signs and its numberless lights and blessings have ever demonstrated the existence of God Almighty as if He was visible close at hand. Be sure that on the score of its heavenly signs Islam has not been put to shame in any age. In this age of yours you could, if you wished, be the witnesses of signs in support of Islam. Is there any other religion in the world which can produce such testimony? ...

“The signs of the truth of the Holy Prophet whom they reject are visible in this age like pouring rain. For seekers, the gates of heavenly signs are as open today as they were in any previous age and for those who are hungry after truth, the banquet of bounties is as much available today as it was before. A Living faith has always the Hand of the Living God at its back and such a faith is Islam.”



HOW I CAPTURED THE TRUTH

(Maryam Saliha)

My name is Maryam Saliha Solomon. I live in Ebensburg, Pennsylvania, a small town in the western part of the state. I have been an Ahmadi since shortly before my marriage in 1952.

The article under consideration for publication originated as a speech that I delivered in 1981 to the Ladies organization of the First United Presbyterian Church in Ebensburg. The speech is the final revision (edited by the late Khalil Ahmad Nasir) evolving out of similiar ones presented in previous years to other local church organizations and to several Senior High School assemblies.

When I began my study of the teachings of Islam in 1951, it was for the sole purpose of merely acquainting myself with my future husband's religious beliefs. I planned to surprise him with my newly acquired knowledge as a wedding present. It was my further hope that it would serve as a reliable cornerstone on which to build a solid foundation for a successful marriage.

At the time, Edward was in his final year of studies at George Washington University Law School. I was employed by the Navy Department in nearby Virginia. It was during the Korean War period and, after Edward earned his law degree, he was inducted into the military service. Marriage plans were held in abeyance until completion of his basic training.

In the meantime, our nation's capital seemed an ideal place to search for the best books available on Islam. My search began with the telephone directory. The Ahmadiyya Movement in Islam was the first to capture my attention by virtue of it's alphabetical listing. I must confess to total ignorance at the time of the fact that Islam has various denominations just as other religions. (I later learned that the Solomon family were members of the Shea Sect.)

Upon contact with the Ahmadiyya Movement by telephone, the then Missionary Incharge, Khalil Ahmad Nasir, invited me to the mission house for instruction. For an in-depth study, he provided books that gave a true interpretation of the faith.

After a series of meetings with the missionary and a thorough examination of the literature, a magnificent new image of Islam began to emerge. As I delved deeper and deeper into these true teachings, I was amazed to discover the appalling amount of misunderstandings and misinterpretations that had been disseminated by various sources about this glorious way of life and it's Prophet.

One by one, thru the simplicity of it's logic, the true interpretation by the Ahmadiyya Movement (based on the text of the Holy Quran and authentic historical facts) presented concrete refutations of the monumental falsehoods and disparagements erroneously attributed to Islam and the Holy Prophet Muhammad.

By the time my marriage plans were completed, I had wholeheartedly embraced and accepted Ahmadiyyat, the true Islam. It has been the strongest force in my life ever since. This, despite the subsequent slowly dawning realization of my husband's total indifference to spiritual concepts; despite the various unfortunate circumstances that have kept me near total isolation from other Ahmadies, almost from the beginning. I have been alone and lonely in a sea of Christianity, and although my present situation seems to offer no hope of change thru worldly means, it is for Allah alone to decree what the future holde.

Inshallah (God willing), I will soon discover in that sea sincere seekers of the truth who will join hands with me in acceptance of Ahmadiyyat, the true Islam, and Allah guides whom He pleases. Ameen.



"O People of the Book! there has come to you Our Messenger who makes clear to you much of what you have kept hidden of the Book and forgives many (of your faults). There has come to you indeed from Allah a Light and a clear Book. Thereby does Allah guide those who seek His pleasure on the paths of peace, and leads them out of (every kind of) darkness into light by His will and guides them to the right path." (5:16-17)

CULTURAL MIX IN ISLAM

(A. Tariq Sharif, York, PA)

With the birth of Islam in the 7th Century AD, the world was introduced to the last and perfect religion of Allah. Besides the countless fresh and unique qualities Islam introduced with its inception, perhaps none was as striking as its message of universality. That is, that Islam, because of its completeness, perfection, and as a culmination of all other previously revealed religions, was to be adopted by every member of the human race. All those who had been following other religions, previously revealed as true and up-to-date, would recognize Islam as that culmination. And Islam with its many beauties would also attract disbelievers.

When the word "human race" was attached to Islam's message, it meant something new and revolutionary to the world. After all, what about the strong feelings of nationality and racial pride that existed and more importantly these feelings as they translated into religious beliefs? Didn't the Jews read of a "God of Israel" and the Arabs have their own god (or gods more accurately)? Were not the Jews or the Chinese or the Fundamentalist Christians the Chosen People? But Islam explained that all nations were equal in the sight of God, that He was *Rabbul Alamin* — Lord of All the Worlds. Let us see why this makes sense both in a worldly sense and more importantly in a spiritual sense.

We no longer live in a world where nations and peoples are separated in isolation. With communications continually improving and jet age travel, the people of the world are being drawn closer and closer. Increasingly, children are growing up all over the world with an international approach to their thinking and the differences in the quality of their lives are narrowing. Nations can no longer be self-subsisting but must rely on each other. What I am getting at is that because of modern technology, one human race is already beginning to form. People no longer need a separate method of communicating with their God because Allah has revealed Islam which fits every lifestyle and situation

This feeling of unity of mankind was also in synch with the Unity of God as taught in the Holy Quran:

"And your God is One God; there is no god but He, the Gracious the Merciful." (21:64)

One might ask that if Islam is such a universal religion, why have nations and races even been created? The Holy Quran provides the answer in plain language:

"O Mankind, We have created you from a male and female, and We have made you tribes and subtribes that you may know one another. Verily the most honorable among you in the sight of Allah is he who is most righteous among you. Surely Allah is All-Knowing, All-Aware." (49:14)

So the answer given in the verse is that nations have been formed to make communities of people who can live comfortably together and know one another. But the verse continues that these geological or physical boundaries do not give any merit to a person. Only righteousness will prevail as a source of merit.

America holds a unique place in the world as a so-called melting pot. It also holds the top spot on the leading edge of technology. Thus it could be a jewel for Islam both because of its power and because it has already achieved a large cultural mix of its own. And this is our job in America.

It was this country and this religion, Ahmadiyya Islam, I was born into. Because my parents were active in Ahmadiyyat throughout my childhood, I came in contact on a regular basis with two "cultural groups" (for lack of a better word)—black Americans and Pakistanis. By the time I was old enough to show any prejudice or bias, (believe me) there was none to be found. I must attribute this to my Islamic upbringing; for in the small town of Pennsylvania I live in, prejudice against blacks and foreigners runs high. But I can remember having none of that even among my non-Muslims friends. I can point to my first friend in Catholic elementary school, my first *Jamaa'at* whom I loved, respected, and grew up with, and even my roommate last year being black.

On the other hand—and I make this distinction not because it should be made in the community but because it should not be made—I also had a close affection with the Pakistani Ahmadies—they were the first people to join us when the York Chapter of the community first took root. My biggest intimation came in

1983 when I lived in Rabwah for 3 month time. Notwithstanding *Hajj, Jalsa* in Rabwah provides an illuminary example of cultural mix in Islam. All the foreigners maintained their own national and cultural identity but at the same time were drawn close as brothers, intertwined in the strong web of Islam. In the same way, I developed strong friendships with the teenagers of Rabwah. Each of us maintained and were proud of our nation and people. But this was not a barrier—it was a point of interest. It did not pull us apart but together. Indeed, each was able to impart in the other the good things we had to offer while both being drawn closer to each other within Islam. It was a revelation to me to see this occur and it made me realize that culture or race should not be a barrier, a reason for friction or misunderstanding. Instead it should be point of interest that brings people closer together. I realized that in every situaton when I had allowed myself to do that, to want to learn about a person's culture or understand his way of thinking, I made a friend of him. Is it not a basic part of a person's education to learn from other people? Why not start with our own Muslim brothers and sisters?

I have pointed out my own situation not because of my merits, but because I believe my attitude was fostered through Islam. I was often a minority of one person in Islam as a white American but growing up in Ahmadiyyat I did not find it a barrier. One major benefactor I would like to point to were the *Atfal* Summer Schools. Through these, especially, I became closer to Ahmadies of my own age and learned the pleasures—not difficulties of cultural mix.

Today America is trying to continue to eliminate segregation and prejudice, so that Americans of all cultures could live in peace and productivity together. But with Islam it could achieve its goal. It should be—must be—that way because Islam has all the answers for society's problems in whatever vein they are. A Muslim America would mean people of all cultures free to express themselves, but as Ahmadi Muslims and held together in the Brotherhood.



TRUTH IS ONE: PATHS ARE MANY

(Sheikh Mubarak Ahmad, Washington, DC)

*(Being a lecture delivered by the Amir & Muballigh Incharge,
Maulana Sheik Mubarak Ahmad, at a conference held at
Charlottesville, VA. on July 18, 1986)*

Worthy Chairman, distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen:

I wish to express my appreciation to the organizers of this convention for their kind invitation to participate in this spiritual search for world peace and unity of mankind. Undeniably it is the most important and timely question which needs an answer.

First of all, we must know the answer to the question, "What is the One Truth?". I am certain that everyone of you will agree that when we say "Truth is One", it means the real truth and the only Truth is our Almighty God. The Holy Quran says:

"Qul Howallaho Ahad" (O , Prophet! Go on saying: God is One. Allah is He on Whom all depends; He begets not, nor is He begotten; and none is like Him who is Most Gracious and Ever Merciful and Nourisher and sustainer).

If we believe this Truth wholeheartedly and sincerely, we come to this conclusion: We are all from One God and we are all His creatures. By this action of His (that is His creation) we all have a very strong relation with One God and thus the oneness of humanity has been established. This oneness of humanity is the only and effective source through which can be removed all sorts of discrimination of color, creed or race; and can strengthen the bonds of brotherhood and goodwill of all human beings, wherever they are.

No doubt there are many paths to reach the only and real Truth, but it must be noted that of those paths some are very long, some are very difficult to travel due to primitive conditions and some are arduous. On some of the paths one finds a lot of zig-zags and one is faced with lots of difficulties due to the complications and hurdles, etc. But the real and shortest, safest and widest and most convenient path is only one path. As God Almighty says

in the Holy Quran:

Innad-dina Indalla-hil Islam.

i.e., if you wish to reach the Truth, the only Truth, and to meet Almighty God, take the route of Islam that is submission to the Will of God which is the only path that has been prescribed by God from the inception of this World. Submission to the Will of God is the only path that is widened and prepared by different Messengers of God until, finally, the Holy Prophet Muhammad (Peace and blessings of Allah be Upon him) removed all the hurdles, complications and twists and turns and made this path Straight and Safe, which leads to the One and only Almighty God. Almighty God Himself has taught us a special prayer:

"Eh'denas-Siratal Mustaqeema," —Guide us in the right path—the path of those upon Whom Thou hast bestowed Thy favors."

That is the object of man's creation, that we all should adopt and walk over this path in order to have an audience with our Almighty God of Honor. If we have this sort of *Liqaa* (meaning audience or meeting with our Lord) it opens up for us the heavenly avenue towards the One Who has created us all.

When one attains this position, that is, nearness to his God, he is bestowed with His Love and Affection which flows from him to creation and he fills their hearts with His Love. He thus patterns his own conduct to the ethics of the Creator of all creation and opens the high portal of knowledge of his beloved Lord and His Magnificence that is thus manifested to him and he in turn passes it on to other human beings which consumes and destroys everything except Love and Tranquility.

"I have chanced upon a gold mine and have been apprised of a treasury of precious stones and I have, by great good fortune, been provided with a most valuable diamond, so precious that if I were to distribute its proceeds among all my fellow beings, everyone of them would become richer than the one who today owns the largest amount of gold and silver. What is that diamond? That diamond is the One True God." (*Blessings of Prayer* by The Promised Messiah)

MUSLIM CONTRIBUTION TO SCIENCE

(Syed Yousuf Ahmad, Canada)

There are a number of perspectives from which one could look at the interesting topic of Muslim contributions to science—especially in the world of today, which is dominated by science and technology. I have divided my presentation into two basic parts to present a clear and brief view of the topic.

First, I would like to discuss the underlying reason for the brilliant successes of the Muslim scholars in their scientific endeavors. It is my contention that the fundamental teachings of Islam create an environment conducive to the advancement of science—that is why Muslim scientists achieved preeminence in the sciences during the Islamic era.

In the second part, I would like to highlight some of the notable contributions of the Muslim scholars to a variety of both the scientific and technological disciplines.

Allow me to elaborate on the first theme, for this is pivotal to what I want to say.

Islam has enjoined upon its followers, as a sacred duty, to study the world around them, and to observe closely the laws of nature. For Islam declares that both the physical and the spiritual worlds have been created by *One God*, and therefore there are many similarities in their operations.

The fundamental principles governing the two apparently dissimilar worlds of science and religion are in harmonious relationship with each other—they are not mutually exclusive, but on the contrary, they are mutually reinforcing.

An insight, for example, into the physical world enhances the understanding of the spiritual world. The corollary of this is that as science advances and human beings gain its mastery, some difficult concepts of the spiritual world become easier to comprehend.

Let me give you an example. Every person who believes in *God* has been asked this question. How does one believe in *God* when one cannot talk to Him, hear Him, or see Him?

The answer is simple: Yes, one can talk to Him, hear Him, and see Him—if one has the proper spiritual equipment.

There is a parallel situation we observe every day in the physical world. We are being beamed by hundreds of audio and video signals from a cluster of satellites and other sources—but we don't hear them or see them. However, with the aid of a small Sony Walkman, we can hear the music or the international news—and with a T.V. wristwatch, we can see pictures from around the globe.

Similarly, in order to receive the spiritual signals, one needs the proper spiritual equipment: prayer, supplication, fasting, meditation, and the study of the Holy Quran.

Thus, the possession of scientific knowledge about electromagnetic waves and radio signals, has helped us to acquire a deep understanding of the mechanisms and requirements of the spiritual world.

Coming back to the topic, however, I would like to add that nothing can emphasize the importance of science in Islam more than the remark by Dr. M. A. Khatib of Damascus University:

“In contrast to 250 verses which are legislative, some 750 verses of the Holy Quran—almost one eighth of it—exhort believers to study nature, to reflect, to make the best use of reason and make the scientific enterprise an integral part of the community's life.”

It was, therefore, no accident that Islamic societies accorded great status to men of knowledge and science—the *Aalims*.

The Holy Quran emphasizes the superiority of the *Aalim*, the man possessed of knowledge and science, by asking: how can those who possess these attributes ever be equal to those who do not? (Chapter 10)

The Prophet of Islam said: “*The quest for knowledge and science is obligatory upon every Muslim, man and woman.*” He enjoined his followers to seek “*Ilm*” (i.e., knowledge) even if they had to travel to China in its search. Clearly in the context of China, he was emphasizing scientific and not religious knowledge.

It will not be out of context to mention that Islam's contribution to science, in creating a climate conducive to the scientific thinking, has been rather unique, as this was not the normal practice in the

early ages, when scientifically trained men were thought to be denying the metaphysical presuppositions of their culture, and were severely persecuted.

It is no wonder then, that when Galileo tried, first, to classify some of the physics problems and to find answers through physics experimentation, he was persecuted by the then Christian authorities. Needless to say, modern thinking has changed and has come very close to the Islamic concepts.

In 1983, in the presence of 33 Nobel Laureates and 300 other scientists, His Holiness, the Pope, declared:

“The Church’s experience, during the Galileo affair and after it, has led to a more mature attitude... The Church itself learns by experience and reflection and she now understands better the meaning that must be given to the freedom of research... one of the most noble attributes for man... it is through research that man attains to truth... This is why the Church is convinced that there can be no real contradiction between science and faith...”

Islam said the same thing 1400 years ago. Says the Holy Quran:

“Allah is He who made (it possible) for you to (acquire) mastery over the ocean; Thus (your) craft can sail thereon with Allah’s command... Allah is He who has subjected to you all that is in the Heavens and the Earth; herein are Allah’s signs for a people given to reflection.” (45:13-14)

First, in these verses, we have been asked to observe a simple scientific fact, that mankind has been given mastery of the ocean, and, in support of this assertion, our attention has been drawn towards the flotation principle which causes boats to float on water by Allah’s command. It then goes on to emphasize that this is not a simple isolated incident, but that mankind has been given mastery over all that is the Heaven and the Earth. This is a clear directive to mankind to observe carefully and repeatedly the world around him.

Any student of science can tell you that observation is the key to scientific research and discovery—and that it cannot be overemphasized.

This reminds me of a story of a Glasgow University Chemistry professor who wanted to imprint upon his students’ young and

impressionable minds, the importance of careful and keen observation. He brought into the classroom a large number of chemicals and asked his students to observe carefully. He prepared an obnoxious looking concoction from the chemicals in a large beaker. He then dipped his finger in the beaker and put his finger into his mouth. The professor then passed the mixture around the class and asked the students to do the same. By the time the beaker came back to the professor, the students were sitting with frowns on their faces and with an unpleasant taste in their mouths. The professor, was of course smiling, and he said to the students: "Let this be a lesson to you on careful observation."

What the students had failed to observe was that the professor had put his middle finger into the beaker, but only his thumb in his mouth.

The Holy Quran taught 1400 years ago that we should observe carefully the world around us, and directed us to reflect in order that we could draw the correct conclusions from our observations. The Holy Quran says that mankind has been given mastery over all that is in the heaven and the earth, but it also says that it is Allah who gives us this mastery. This is a sign for people to reflect and think upon—in case they draw the wrong conclusion, that mastery of the universe and the acquisition of science and technology was the result of only human effort. In reality, the scientific advances have occurred by Allah's command.

To elaborate the importance of correct conclusion in scientific investigation, allow me to relate to you an interesting story. A Ph.D. student from the field of Social Sciences, conducted a meticulous study on a group of students who had passed through the educational system of an Ivy League American University. His methodology was perfect, his sampling technique elaborate, and he used the state-of-the-art statistical analysis available at the University's computing center. The data clearly showed, that over a span of more than 50 years, with a 95 percent confidence level, the female students had on an average, 2.9 children, whereas, the male students had only 1.8 children.

Based on this hard statistical data and irrefutable evidence, the Ph.D. student concluded that:

"Females have more children than Males."

Needless to say, the hard-working student never got his degree.

This is why the Quran has beautifully laid out the two basic aspects of science. First, a careful observation, but that is not enough—it must be followed with a proper conclusion made not hastily, but after reflection.

Following these Quranic injunctions, barely a hundred years after the Prophet's death, the Muslims had made it their task to master the then known sciences. With feverish haste, but systematically, they translated the entire corpus of the then known knowledge in their religious language, Arabic. Founding institutes of advanced study (*Baitul Hikmas*) and prestigious universities (like the Nizamiyya) particularly in the Middle East, they acquired an ascendancy in sciences that lasted for the next 600 years.

A semi-quantitative measure of the level of scientific creation in Islam is given by George Sarton in his monumental "*History of Science*". Sarton has divided his story of the highest achievement in science into ages, each one lasting 50 years. With each, he has associated one central figure. He starts with the age of Plato, followed by the ages of Aristotle, Euclid, Archimedes, and so on.

From 750 to 1000, it is, however, an unbroken succession of the ages of Muslim scientists: Jabir, Khwarizmi, Razi, Masudi, Abul-wafa, Biruni and Omar Khayam. In those 350 years, Arabs, Turks, Afghans and Persians—chemists, algebraists, clinicians, geographers, mathematicians, physicists and astronomers of the commonwealth of Islam—held the world stage of sciences.

Only after 1100 in Sarton's scheme, do the first Western names begin to appear. However, for another 250 years, they only share the honors with the men of Islam like Ibn Rushd, Nasiruddin Tusi and Ibn Nafis.

To mark the level of this achievement and to emphasize the originality and caliber of science during the Islamic era, I quote from a speech of an Ahmadi Muslim scientist and Nobel Laureate in Physics, our own Professor A. Salaam:

"Contrary to the views of the Greeks, *Ibn Sina* the Muslim scientist (known as *Avicenna* in the West, 980-1037) regarded light as an emission by the luminous sources of particles travelling at finite speed; he understood the nature of heat and force and motion.

"Another Muslim scientist, *Al Khazini of Merv* (12th century) in a remarkable treatise entitled "*The Book of the Balance of Wisdom*", worked out a theory of universal gravity directed towards the center of the Earth, he was also responsible for the assumption that air has weight, and for an original work on capillarity.

"*Qutubiddin Shirazi* and his student *Kamal-ud-din* gave the first explanation of the rainbow. They stated that the speed of light is in the inverse ratio to the optical, rather than the material density of the medium; and that certain types of lenses could avoid spherical aberration."

Even a brief account of the Muslim contributions to science cannot be complete without mentioning the achievements of *Sheikh Abu Rihan Mohammed Al-Biruni*. The well known historian of science. Mr. George Sarton remarks:

He (meaning *Al-Biruni*) was one of the greatest scientists of Islam and, all considered, one of the greatest of all times."

Among *Al-Biruni's* noted scientific contributions are the explanation of the working of natural springs by the hydro-static principle and the description of several abnormalities, including what we call Siamese Twins. He composed a *Materia Medica* entitled "*Kitabul-Saydana*" or the Book of Drugs. He was also responsible for accurately determining the specific gravity of 18 precious metals and stones. The greatest work of *Al-Biruni* is, however, *Qanun-al-Masudi*—a book mainly on astronomy and recognized as a standard book of reference.

What I have mentioned here are simply the highlights of some selected scientific works of Muslim scientists. In reality, science had become the lifeblood of Islamic culture, and as Brian Stock has remarked in his perceptive review:

"The most remarkable feature is...that science in one form or another was the part-time or full-time occupation of so large a number of (Muslim) intellectuals."

So extensive was the involvement of the Muslim world in science that, the Arabic language rapidly became an international language of science in a stronger sense than had been true of any other language. By the eleventh century the great Persian scientist *Al-Biruni* was describing the Arabic language as the language most

suitied for scientific expression. By using the Arabic language, Muslim scientists were able to make a large number of original scientific contributions, for example:

Al-Khwarizmi was the first author in the field of mathematics called Algebra. The word "Algebra" is of Arabic origin and the term *al-jabr*, designates one of the two basic operations that *Al-Khwarizmi* used in solving the quadratic equations. His book is original and does not seem to have had a prototype in another language.

It is to be noted that Europe became acquainted with algebra through the translation of the first part of *Al-Khwarizmi's Kitab Al-Jabr wal-Muqabilah* in the latter half of the twelfth century.

I would like to describe now a modern field of scientific research—Laser technology. Nations are debating, at the highest levels of political and scientific decision making, whether or not they should join the research proposed by the United States on the Strategic Defence Initiative—popularly known as 'Star Wars Research'—a world of laser beams zapping enemy missiles in the outer space. As a result, in the Western world the research on optics, the basic element of laser systems, has been accelerated, and billions of dollars are being spent on improving the understanding of the science of optics.

Muslim scientists have made an immense amount of contribution to the field of optics and had made substantial progress. *Ibn-al-Hytham* (or Al Hazen in the West) wrote a large and comprehensive work on optics called *Kitab-al-Manziri*, i.e., The Book of Optics. It includes, not only a new theory, but also important discussions of the rectilinear propagation, reflection, and refraction of light and color. Its superiority to the treatises of Euclid, Ptolemy and others, soon became clear to Latin medieval writers. In the thirteenth century, Roger Bacon referred to *Al-Haytham* frequently as "The author on optics."

Witelo's comprehensive book on optics made liberal use of *Ibn-al-Haytham's* text, and John Pecham's summary of *Ibn-Haytham's* work was widely read. With the exception to Witelo, however, none of these writers was in a position to appreciate fully the mathematical character of optics, and it was not until the Renaissance and the seventeenth century that this aspect of the

book was understood and exploited.

In summary, *Al-Haytham* can justifiably be called the father of the modern Laser Technology.

Similarly, Muslim scientists made contributions in many branches of Life Sciences. Examples include internal and clinical medicine and Public Health. A famous book by *Ibn-Bultan* called "*Tawquim-al-Sehat*" had elaborated on the six natural principles, and on the preservation of good health, and had recommended the therapeutic use of music.

It was under the patronage of Muslim Caliphs that hospitals were first established and they flourished in the Muslim world. The early Muslim concept of hospital became the prototype for the development of the modern hospital.

Of all the fields in which the Muslims have made significant contributions to the progress of civilization, that of mechanical technology has not been widely known. As a result, a damaging belief has taken root, both in the West and in the Muslim countries, that modern technology is solely a western achievement.

The historical records show that knowledge in the field of mechanical technology was at an advanced level in the Islamic world. There was a long tradition of water engineering in the Hispano-Arab world.

The mechanical arts flourished during the Islamic era, especially between the 9th and 13th centuries. The Muslim engineers made use of the effects of water pressure and air pressure, and they had a clear understanding of arithmetic, plane geometry and measurement techniques—and they used the sciences to the full in the construction and assembly of their engineering systems.

The list of Muslim contributions to science and technology, is endless—and one can choose any branch of science or engineering and can come up with some excellent achievements of Muslim scholars. What I have presented to you is simply a glimpse of a remarkable record.

In closing, I would like to comment on a question which naturally arises in one's mind: Why are the Muslims no longer on the forefront of modern science and technology?

To give an outside observer's assessment, I quote from an article

by Frances Giles, published in March '83 issue of the prestigious scientific journal *Nature*. He has raised the question: "What is wrong with Muslim science?" And he says:

"At its peak about one thousand years ago, the Muslim world made a remarkable contribution to science, notably in mathematics and medicine. Baghdad in its heyday, and southern Spain, built universities to which thousands flocked: rulers surrounded themselves with scientists and artists. A spirit of freedom allowed Jews, Christians and Muslims to work side by side. Today all this is but a memory... Expenditures on science and technology may have increased in recent years though that increase has been, perforce, limited to oil rich countries... some of these countries are busy fighting wars which cost billions of dollars—no doubt they have little time for science..."

So then, can we Muslims turn the pages of history back, and excel in science and technology once again? I believe that this can be done by perseverance, passionate commitment and prayer.

In conclusion, I would like to reiterate that Muslims have had a glorious past and have led the world in the sciences. The most important contribution to science, however, in my view, is the message of the Holy Quran giving a clear directive to all mankind to pursue scientific research essentially, commanding the scientists to seek knowledge, and proclaiming that there is no limit to scientific progress; and that the entire universe is there, by *Allah's* command, to be discovered and to be conquered.

Acknowledgement: Most of the material presented above was taken from the following references, and no originality in form, syntax or substance is claimed by the author:

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- (2) *The Gulf University and Science in the Arab Islamic Commonwealth*, by Prof. A. Salaam. The Review of Religions, p 23-46, Vol. LXXIX, No. 4, April 1984.
- (3) *Al-Biruni: A Great Muslim Scientist*, The Review of Religions, p 54-56, Vol. LXXIX, No. 4, April 1984.
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WESTERNIZATION AND ISLAM

(Dhul Waqar Yaqub, Chicago, IL)

Almost all observers of the American scene have agreed that America can be characterized as promoting equality, of some sort, as a central value in the American way of life.

In fact, equality emerged early as the main element in the development of the American character. This country was dedicated, as Abraham Lincoln said in the Gettysburg Address, to the proposition that all men are created equal and endowed by the Creator with certain inalienable rights. This was America's idea despite the class system and attitudes originally brought over from Europe, and despite, indeed, the grim fact of chattel slavery. The core-value of equality (at least for most white Americans), was expressed in the social tone of American life.

Leaving aside the reality of individual and institutional racism, America presents to the world a society that, unlike any in Europe, Asia or Africa, has no class distinctions and titles. Every man can be free, independent and respected. Here everyone can work to serve his own interests and not those of a master class, with all the bowing and scraping that such service involves. Almost anyone who wants to, and who works hard enough, can purchase land and become an independent free man or woman.

Equality of condition does not, however, connote economic equality. Obviously, there are the rich and the poor here too. Equality of condition lies in the fact that in ordinary human relations the wealthy have no sanction to treat the poor as underlings nor to expect a show of deference from them.

With equality comes independence and self-reliance. America is a country where a man's achievement depends only on his own God-given powers and application, not on inherited privileges or the favor and support of the privileged.

How does this aspect of the American character, equality of condition, compare with Islamic values concerning equality? Within this framework there is clear compatibility between Islam and American westernization. Allah says in the Holy Quran,

"Indeed We have honored the children of Adam, and We carry them by land and by sea, and provide them good things and have exalted them far above many of those whom We have created." (17:71).

Here Allah has stressed that He has equally honored all the children of Adam and that all avenues of progress and prosperity have been kept open equally for all men and women. And, in its book of law, Islam allows no caste system, priesthood or superiority based on ancestry, wealth, race or country. Islam characterizes the best man, the superior men and women, as those who are the most righteous.

The American national character, as it relates to doing business and earning money can, to a limited extent, find agreement within an Islamic system. Westernization departs from Islam not in concept, but in degree.

From the beginning, Americans had to work hard to survive, earn a living and develop a civilization from a wilderness. The habit of hard work, however, has always been regarded not merely as a necessity in the struggle for existence, but also as an intrinsic value, an attribute of good character. Productive work was expected not only of the tiller of the soil and the urban working man, but of all classes of society, including the established and the well-to-do. The emphasis was, and is, on productivity—here and now.

This emphasis, and its tangible results, that is, a high standard of living and abundant material goods, has brought forth the charge of "Materialism," which says that Americans idolize money and material well-being. This characterization has long been a favorite put down, not only from foreigners, but also many native Americans. It was Washington Irving, in 1836, who coined the phrase "The Almighty Dollar," and described it as "That great object of universal devotion throughout the land."

The American pursuit of wealth and comfort has been further described as the basic principle of equality. Americans tend to feel that in an equal and open society, the only tangible prizes of success are physical comforts and material wealth. Hence the chief passion derived from equality is "The love of well-being," the pursuit of "Physical prosperity." *Hazrat Khalifatul Masih II*, (May Allah be pleased with him) described this western phenomenon very clearly when he said:

“The modern western civilization is based on a philosophy of materialism resting on observation and experiment. The intensity of the national spirit in the west has flowed from this philosophy as a direct result. The extreme type of materialism is a result of a materialistic philosophy of life. It leads to luxurious living and...striving to make the utmost of this life, by whatever means that should happen to be handy. This is the main reason why luxury has been developed, in the west, into an art and a cult.”

American commitment to work, planning, organizing, observing nature and utilizing its forces, is passed from generation to generation and continues to be developed to greater efficiency every day.

The typical American, in this view, is the businessperson, and America is described as a business civilization. In America, the material basis of civilization is accepted for the entire structure, and money making is the only serious business of life for most people. As far back as 1920, Calvin Coolidge put it very approvingly when he said that, “The business of America is business.”

It was a naturalized U.S. citizen, Hugo Munsterberg, who, in 1904, provided America with a defense for the American passion for economic gain. The American, he said, is not primarily interested in accumulating money, as in being wealthy, but rather, in money as a measure of his ability and level of productivity. He scorns money that is not made through his own work or capacity. He is also more interested in the getting—the pursuit—than in the having. “He would not for any price give up the occupation of making money.” There is no doubt, then, that the earning of money is highly valued in America. I emphasize again, “Earning” because Americans work hard for their standard of living.

Now what is Islam’s position on this? We find that Islam teaches that hard work and the reward for hard work is a natural acceptable order. Allah says in the Holy Quran, “*We have created man to toil and struggle.*” (90:5). The Propeht of Islam (PBOH) says: “*The best food is that which a man earns with the labor of his own hands.*” Again, the Quran Says: “*...Man shall have nothing but what he strives for.*” (53:40). In other words, man must earn his livelihood by the sweat of his brow. For the Quran says: “*...Allah has favored some of you above others in worldly gifts...will they then deny the favor of Allah?*” (16:72).

Islam recognizes the diversity of capacities and talents, which is in itself beneficent, and consequently the diversity in earnings and material rewards. It is a divine law that in every age some nations, by their superior intellect and greater devotion to work come to acquire ascendancy and control over other nations.

This is neither unfair nor unjust so long as stronger people do not usurp the rights of the weaker ones; and the less fortunate are provided opportunities for the full development of their talents, intelligence, and potential for earning the good things of life.

Islam condones and promotes individual enterprise. Allah makes it clear, however, that the earning of money should not be the primary objective of this life. He considers those people who devote all their time to the acquisition of material comforts and worldly benefits to be the greatest losers. Allah says:

"...Shall We tell you of those who are the greatest losers in respect of their work? Those whose labor is all lost in search after things pertaining to the life of this world, and they think that they are doing good works." (18:104-105).

Again He says:

"The desire for worldly possessions beguiles you till you reach the graves. You will soon come to know the vanity of your pursuits." (102:2).

Then Allah tells the Muslims:

"We have indeed bestowed upon you the seven oft-recited verses (of the Fatiha) and the great Quran. So do not lift thine eyes towards that which We have bestowed upon some of them as a temporary provision..." (15:88-89)

But instead pray:

"Lord, grant us good in this world and good in the world to come, and protect us from the torment of the fire" (2:202).

GENERAL WELFARE

I shall now discuss the powers conferred and duties imposed by the American Constitution concerning the General Welfare of the American people and how that compares with the Islamic point of view. For this discussion, "General Welfare" means, "General Economic Welfare." The constitution says: "The Congress shall have power to lay and collect taxes, duties, imports and excises, to

pay debts and provide for the common defense and general welfare of the United States.”

This clause does not seem to grant to Congress a power to legislate for the general welfare. The general welfare clause is tied to the power to tax and to spend. The question is, whether the Constitution establishes limits on the power of congress to tax and spend for the general welfare of the people.

Take for example the importance of education. In the past, this was traditionally a local, at most a state, responsibility. There has been little question about the basic duty of government to provide educational opportunities for all young people. The question concerned the ability of local and state governments to provide them adequately, and in recent years, equally, for everyone. The unanimous Supreme Court decision on desegregation of public schools, in 1954, determined that the ultimate responsibility must be national in order to more fairly equalize educational opportunities.

In 1986, liberals are still complaining that not enough is being done to bring this about, but the principle, at least, is clear in law. When a local or state government either could not, or would not, promote the general welfare, the court was saying, then the national government would have to step in and help the people attain their rights.

From the aforementioned example, it is clear that the American position, which makes the national government responsible for guarding and promoting the material welfare of its people, is compatible with the Islamic position. Allah says:

“It is decreed for you that you shall not hunger therein nor shall you be naked: and that you shall not thirst therein, nor shall you be exposed to the sun.” (20:119-120).

These two verses point to the fact that to provide food, clothing and shelter to its people—their primary necessities of life—is the first duty of a civilized government. And, society can only be called civilized when all its members are adequately provided with these necessities.

One illustration from Islamic history will suffice to show how these general principles were interpreted and applied in practice by early Muslims. Hazrat Umar, the second Khalifa, (may God be pleased with him) was one day going about incognito to find out whether the people had any grievance against anyone. In one village he heard

someone crying and came upon a woman who was tending a pot on the fire. Three children who were near her were crying. The Khalifa asked the woman what their trouble was. She said that they had had nothing to eat for two days, and as she had no food, she had put an empty pot on the fire to make the children think that food would soon be ready. She hoped this would cajole them into sleep. The Khalifa returned to Medina where he got flour, butter, meat and dates, and put them in a bag. He then called a servant and asked him to lift the bundle on to his back. The servant protested that he would carry the bundle himself. Umar said, "No doubt you can carry this bundle for me now, but who will carry my burden on the Day of Judgment?" He meant that since he had neglected his duty to provide for the woman and her children, the only atonement he could make was to carry the bundle of provisions to her himself. This makes it clear that the elected officials of an Islamic government are responsible for the general welfare of the people.

The growth and expansion of the idea of general welfare has led, in recent years, to the coinage, "The Welfare State" a term that has the capacity to excite strong feelings in America. If we examine the complex implications of the term it helps us understand the meaning of the general welfare in our time.

In the American system, it is probable that for most citizens the term, "Welfare State" carries a negative connotation. There seems to be two reasons for this. First, there is the word "Welfare" itself, which implies public charity or assistance. To "be On Welfare," as the saying goes, is, in some eyes, not to be respectable and to be looked down upon, and is not really what anyone wants. There are few people who would not prefer to take care of themselves than be taken care of by others. When this narrow, or limited, meaning of welfare is carried over into the meaning of the term "Welfare State," the latter implies that in some sense we are all on welfare.

Secondly, Americans are generally against the governments' adopting some people—the unemployed, the unemployable, those who seem not to want to work—and making the employed pay the cost. This appears to those who work as confiscating taxes for the support of undesirables. It is felt that too many on welfare are cheaters and maligners. Indeed, to most Americans the term "Welfare State" means socialism; and socialism is an idea that makes most Americans fighting mad.

Government ownership and control of the means of production is socialism, as most Americans understand it. It seems clear that the term "Welfare State" will continue to carry a negative connotation. From one point of view the United States is a welfare state. Nevertheless Americans will continue to promote the general welfare as they perceive it and will strive to do so more and more effectively. There will also likely continue to be a fundamental conflict between the promotion of the general welfare and the protection of individual freedom—a conflict that underlies almost all the modern disputes about the subject.

The Islamic value system makes it clear that the poor have a right to a portion of the wealth of the well-to-do, and there is no platform for controversy over the matter. But while the Islamic system enjoins helping the poor, it disapproves of any segment of a society submitting to laziness and idleness. It also frowns upon begging. The object of state allowances in a Muslim government is to ideally bring everyone to a state of self-subsistence. State allowances are made only in deserving cases and only after exacting investigation has occurred. Hazrat Umar (may God be pleased with him) once noticed a person asking for alms who had a bagful of flour with him. The Khalifa took away the bag of flour, emptied it out before some camels, and turned to the man and said, "Now you may beg."

In contrast to the American feeling about a "Welfare State," Islam encourages the concept based on the belief that sharing your all, even in the midst of adversity, is an outstanding character trait of a Muslim. The Holy Prophet (PBOH) had suggested that in case of extreme necessity it would be well to follow the example of a tribe "Who when confronted with shortage of provisions, collected all they had and divided it equally among themselves. So, they are of me and I am of them."

COMMON DEFENSE

The United States has been engaged in major wars one year out of every seven of its national existence. In fact, the old war department records show over 100 calls to active service, including more than 60 foreign expeditions and 76 Indian wars—several of which were costlier both in money and in loss of life than some of the "Major" wars. The 20th century has been the bloodiest and most barbarous in the history of man. The United States has contributed substantially to that shame

In the world wars of this century, America has shown how to wage and win modern technological wars. It entered with great energy and expenditure into the new era of cold war and undeclared hot wars that followed World War II.

Provision for the common defense has meant defense of the national territory against armed invasion by enemy forces. Armed invasion has been an extremely rare occurrence in our history. The champions of adequate defense had much more in mind when they spoke of "the national interest" than mere territorial defense.

Far off military and economic developments came to be considered as 'involved in the common defense.' This demanded the dispatch of Navies, Armies and Air Forces to all corners of the world. Also the notion of national honor or prestige became closely associated with that of national interest, and the protection of Americans living abroad came to be regarded as part and parcel of the national interest. As a matter of fact, on more than one hundred occasions, the armed forces of the United States have been landed on foreign soil for the protection of the lives and property of American citizens.

During the 1960's Americans began to realize that the country's power and ability to control and shape events were limited. This was recognized by John F. Kennedy, who states, "We must face the fact that the United States is neither omnipotent nor omniscient, that we are only six percent of the World's population, that we cannot impose our will upon the other ninety-four percent of mankind. We cannot right every wrong or reverse each adversity, and therefore, there cannot be an American solution to every world problem."

Americans found this bitter truth as a result of Vietnam. Tens of thousands of our young men were killed in a war which was somehow not a war. The objectives were to "Teach" the enemy that they could not win militarily against the superior forces of the United States, rather than objectives set on victory. We justified being in Vietnam as an application of the doctrine of "Containment." America was setting out to "Contain" expansive tendencies of the Communist powers. And despite the fact that we had the bomb, we lost the war.

Other segments of America believe that war is evil and that some alternative can be found for it. William Penn, founder of the Quaker colony in Pennsylvania taught that "love and persuasion" have "more force than weapons of war" and that "bearing arms,

even for self-defense, is unlawful" for a true Christian.

William Ladd, founder of the American Peace Society, proposed that a regular system of arbitration be established under principles executed by a Congress of Nations, so that all International disputes would be adjudicated by a recognized court of nations.

Implementation of these precepts took form in the League of Nations and a Court of International Justice after World War I. After World War II, these same precepts took form again in the United Nations and the International Court of Justice. Unfortunately, these international peace-keeping bodies have not deterred violence and the continuous preparation for war in the name of defense and peace.

The Islamic concept of common defense is clearly stated in the Holy Quran, where Allah says:

"Permission to fight is given to those against whom war is made, because they have been wronged—and Allah indeed has power to help them. Those who have been driven out from their homes unjustly only because they said, 'Our Lord is Allah'—And if Allah did not repel some people by means of others, there would surely have been pulled down cloisters and churches and synagogues and mosques, wherein the name of Allah is oft commemorated. And Allah will surely help one who helps Him. Allah is indeed Powerful, Mighty." (22:40-41).

In these verses Allah gives reasons why the Muslims were granted permission to take up arms. First, because they had been driven from their homes only because they believed in God. Secondly, because they had to fight in self-defense in order to save Islam from extermination.

The purpose and objective of the wars of Islam was never to deprive anyone of his home and possessions, nor to deprive freedom to whole nations, nor to compel to submit to a foreign yoke under the garb of making them civilized, as Western nations do. Nor did Islamic states seek to explore new markets and acquire new colonies. The objective of war under Islamic code is to establish freedom of belief and worship and to fight in defense of the country, honor and freedom against an unprovoked attack. War is waged also to defend religious places of worship against desecration or destruction.

Islam does not support the belief that war is always evil and the bearing of arms for self-defense is wrong. The Holy Prophet (PBOH) said: "O ye people, desire not to meet the enemy in battle and seek of Allah peace and tranquility. But if you meet the enemy in battle, then be steady and persevering in fighting and remember that paradise lies under the shadow of swords." (*Sahih Muslim*)

Forbidding Muslims to provoke hostilities on the one hand, and exhorting them to fight with determination on the other, points to the subtle truth that while Islam warns Muslims against being aggressors in any case, it at the same time aims at strengthening the hearts of Muslims against the fear of Death. On the one hand, Muslims are taught never to be oppressors under any circumstances, and on the other, to be brave and fearless in the face of death.

In closing the topic of defense, I want to point out a similarity between Islam and westernization regarding settling international disputes. The western approach to the establishment of a "system of arbitration" under a congress of nations so that international disputes may be settled is compatible with the Islamic approach. The ideal aimed at by Islam is the establishment of world government, so as to remove all causes of international friction and wars.

Islam lays down the rules which encourage the establishment of a body like the United Nations organization for the settlement of international disputes. Allah says:

"And if two parties of believers fight each other, make peace between them, but if (after that) one of them transgresses against the other, fight the party that transgresses until it returns to the command of Allah. Then if it returns, make peace between them with equity, and act justly. Verily Allah loves the just." (49:10).

This verse primarily addresses the settlement of disputes between Muslim parties, but it equally embodies a sound basis and provides regulations on which a really effective "United Nations Organization" can be structured. These rules and regulations are as follows:

1. When there is disagreement between two nations, all other nations should serve notice upon them to submit their differences to the 'United Nations Organization' for settlement.
2. If one, or both, nations refuse to submit to the United Nations, or having submitted, refuse to accept the award of the United

Nations and prepare to make war, all other nations within that united body, should stand together to fight the warring nations.

3. After the warring nations have been subdued, terms of peace should be settled between the two original nations in dispute.

4. The other nations should act as mediators and not as parties to the dispute.

5. The other nations must not put forth claims arising out of the conflict with the nations resisting authority.

6. The terms of peace between the nations in dispute must be just and equitable with reference to the merits of the dispute. Justice and equality for all must be the principle objective in all deliberations and decisions.

7. The mediators should not be influenced by the fact that one of the nations had defied their authority.

This system of international security was laid down at a time when no one had even begun thinking about these matters. These principles affect the security and prosperity of the whole of mankind and as long as these principles are not used as the basis of a United Nations organization, that organization will continue to fail in its main purpose.

FAMILY

The fact that the American family is different from a family in other Western countries has been commented on, both by foreign visitors and by the Americans themselves. The most obvious manifestation of the difference is this:

In other western (and non-western) countries, family name and status, both living and ancestral, is a contributing factor in judging a person's acceptability and worth. But in the United States, a person is what he is because of his own individual qualities, not those of his family. Another important social difference is: In most traditional cultures, one customarily asks a person, when he meets him, who is he—which means that one wants to find out what kind of family he comes from. In the United states, one is inclined to ask a newcomer, what he does, how does he earn his living. This difference in social usage is sometimes considered to be vulgar or otherwise undesirable. Perhaps it is, but it nevertheless seems to be the essence of American attitude.

There are other obvious differences as well. The family in contemporary America is no longer an economic unit as it once was. The family here has almost no self-contained economic function, except in rural areas, and even there the notion of the self-subsistent independent family is fast disappearing. There was a time when all, or most, family members worked at the same trade and earned their livelihood providing a certain service to the community. This was so prevalent that often families took their names from their occupation. For example: the bakers, the shoemakers, the hunters, etc. The norm today, even if it is not the ideal, is for the father, either alone, or with the cooperation of the mother, to gain the family's livelihood through work for a third party—usually a company or other institution for which he receives fees or is paid a salary. It is, thus, no longer so necessary for the nuclear family nor the extended family members to live together. The purely economic necessity for the family remaining together has ceased to exist in this country.

The western man wanting to marry, often approaches a prospect abruptly. He has no time to beat around the bush. He meets a girl in a shop, the theater, or at a party. He needs a wife, thinks this one will do. He asks the question, she answers. The next day they are married and then proceed to inform their parents. The couple often does not take the time, nor feel the need, to learn to know each other. That comes later. Usually the qualities they look for in a mate are physical beauty, social status, type of job, wealth, one common interest and what you can do for me.

Admittedly, this is a simple version of a much more complicated phenomenon. However, it is accurate to a large degree. Let me emphasize here that I am speaking of general trends rather than particular cases. Everyone knows of one or more families that break all the rules; families that are still economic units, families that do not live together but retain strong family feeling, families that live together but have no family feelings. Men who, before they married, got to know the family and background of the girl, and so forth.

Let us look at the approach to marriage within another culture. A man who marries in Pakistan or India, usually knows not only his bride (or at least his parents know her), but he also knows her whole family—indeed, her whole line of descent into the fourth generation! He knows how the girl was brought up, the nature of her environment and relations, and the circumstances under which she lives.

He knows the condition of her father, and even all the intricacies of inheritance are arranged in advance. This, as well as other social and economic reasons contribute to a much more stable family life later.

It does not mean that modern American families are all entirely different from what they used to be, or from the families in other countries. Let it be perfectly clear that some western families are founded on, and grow strong within, enlightened spiritual and moral values. The west just needs more of that.

This cursory description of the character of the American family leaves out one very large group that departs sharply from the norm. These are the families of the poor and the disadvantaged. The families where one or both the parents are on relief, or welfare, as it is called. These are families who are financially subsidized by the government. There are many such people, several millions at least. Their family life is so different as almost to constitute a separate culture within the larger society.

This culture, on the domestic side, is characterized by a matriarchal organization and an almost universal absence of fathers. Marriages are informal affairs, and even when there is a father somewhere in the picture, he stays in the background.

Most U.S. welfare laws require the father to be absent if the family is to receive more than token assistance. Usually, the father has almost no role in the family's life. He goes from one wife to another, and the mother is forced to bring up the children alone, sometimes resorting to illegal and immoral activities for survival.

This nuclear family, that tight little island with its built-in stresses and strains, is yielding to its inner explosiveness. It is being forced apart by its inability to adopt to a changing world. With a divorce rate of one in two marriages, over 80% of all single parent households are headed by women, and nearly 50% of female-headed families are at the bottom of the economic heap. Children of these families receive inadequate care or none at all, while their mothers work. Runaways are a massive problem. The new breed of drug addicts are mostly young people (even as young as 8 or 9 years old). Youth suicide is growing at an alarming rate, and sexual abuse of children is of such magnitude that half of the children over the age of 8 have been, or will become, victims.

The U.S. is a country that stands alone among the western

industrialized nations in having no coherent family policy. Our sociologists speak and write only of the external, or social aspect of the family. They have not addressed the intrinsic, internal nature of the problem. They don't have the tools to effectively address the relations between men and women, in and out of marriage; the relations of parents and children. What is mature love. What is the responsibility of the young to the elderly. All these human interactions which create crises and tensions, and conflicts of love and duty, of reason and passion, from which no individual can escape.

But Islam has something definitive to say about all of these conditions. It provides guidelines for the inward aspects of all our social and family problems. Allah says:

"O ye who believe! Let not one people deride another people ... nor let one group of women deride other women...and do not defame your people, nor call one another by derogatory names...avoid much suspicion, for suspicion in some cases is a sin. And spy not on one another, neither backbite one another." (49:12-13).

This verse mentions some of the evils which cause discord, dissensions and differences that corrode, corrupt and contaminate a family unit. Ridiculing and taunting other members of the family; spying by the wife or husband; calling each other bad names; being suspicious of each other, and back-biting, are all evils that split families asunder. The main cause of conflicts and tensions within the family are conceit, arrogance and a false sense of superiority. These are evils of the inner self and Muslims are cautioned to be on constant guard against them. By removing these basic causes of disharmony and disagreement among different members of the family, Muslims will begin to lay the foundation of a new social order in the west, *Insha-Allah*.

RELIGION

America's contribution to the technology of the modern world is never questioned. The facts are there, and they cannot be denied. But has this country made a significant contribution to the spiritual well-being of the world—or at least of the western world, in which it plays such an important part?

On the political side, the U.S. was the first country in the western world to make an effective separation between religion and the state

—effective in that it allowed both realms to act out their own course. Similarly, it was the first country in the western world, to write into its basic law the principle of religious tolerance and then to implement that law in practice. The result has been that Americans have learned to appreciate the religious beliefs of others—of their neighbors and of people in other lands.

On the whole, America may be considered a religious nation; a nation which does not persecute other peoples because they are not religious, nor because they are religious in a different way.

From the beginning American religion was lay-oriented in the manner and substance of its preaching and practice, as demonstrated by the striking success of revivalism, that form of activity which promotes religious revivals.

This condition encouraged another trait of American religion—its activist temperament. Americans tend to judge religion by its tangible results—its success in attracting members, its engagement in social reform activities, and the like. Religion to Americans is more a way of doing and acting within social parameters, rather than a believing. Feeling is glorified over reflection, strict theology is often neglected. Sometimes, even an unlearned ministry (a calling) is considered superior to a learned one. Again, this does not apply within all American religious circles, but it is a general attitude.

Religion has prevaded all aspects of American culture and largely determines its basic political, moral, and social views. Because of the strong and sometimes violent pattern for dealing with religious diversity in Europe, America gave birth to, what may be termed, religious radicals. One such sect was a non-institutional deism, a philosophical faith based on universal reason and morality.

Deism asserted—on the basis of reason alone—that God exists and His worship consists in a life of virtue and repentance. Man will be rewarded or punished for his deeds in a future life. However, it denied traditional Christian teachings about Jesus, original sin, redemption, and special Biblical revelation.

The religious radicals included some of the founding fathers of America, such as Thomas Paine, Benjamin Franklin, and Thomas Jefferson. Jefferson went as far as to produce a revised version of the New Testament, deleting all references to miracles and making Jesus out to be nothing more than a powerful moral teacher.

One of the embarrassing problems for the Christian faith was that not one of the first six presidents of the United States was an Orthodox Christian.

Even though the U.S. constitution grants freedom of religion here, religious practices have not been entirely without censure. Conflict between atheist and religionist, over many issues, including displaying religious symbols (like the cross) on public buildings, are in the news even today.

The most notable conflicts engaging American religious groups at mid-twentieth century involved their relation to secular society, particularly to government. Within a century after the guarantee of free exercise of religion, the Mormons were prohibited by federal law from practising polygamy, as commanded by their faith. In the 1940's the Supreme Court first denied, and then affirmed, the right of Jehovah's witnesses schoolchildren to refuse to salute the American flag on religious grounds.

An even more explosive question was that of "Religion in the schools." Originally, popular education had been undertaken by the churches, and even after the public school system was established, public education had a protestant "nonsectarian" tone. The main argument was that since the Judeo-Christian faiths are intimately involved in American culture, to excise all religious expression from the public schools is to deprive children of an essential spiritual dimension of education and ultimately to foster irreligion.

In this controversy the question was raised as to whether government could legally aid and foster religion in general, or all actual religions as opposed to establishing a specific religion. Also raised was the question of whether freedom of religion extended to the right not to believe and not to be offended in one's belief.

In the 1950's the signal victory of the movement "to put God back into the schools" was the insertion of the words, "Under God," back into the pledge of allegiance.

In the 1960's the secular challenge to religion was posed most dramatically from within the churches themselves. A new school of "radical" theologians declared that "God is dead." The response to this was immediate and intense. These radicals became a popular sensation among collegians, a source of stimulus to many lay and clerical members of the traditional faith, and the object of angry

attacks and threats by religious people who were offended by their views. For the most part, the declaration that God is dead was rejected as absurd and untrue.

As the U.S. approaches the 1990's the future prospects for religion remain uncertain. The basic premises of religious faith have been challenged from within by intelligent, dedicated Christian scholars. Not only are traditional doctrines and dogmas being questioned, but religion itself, in any form, and even belief in God, in some circles, is dismissed as irrelevant and worthless in a secular age. On the other hand, owing largely to these critics, there has seldom been such intense discussion of basic religious issues. Does God exist? What is the nature of God? Of what value and meaning are faith and worship? This has recently stimulated intense evangelizing in this country.

The major question that remains is: Will religion in the West—namely Christianity—continue to become more and more a cultural accessory and fade away? Or will it be revitalized, renewed, re-inspired, and perhaps, take shape in a new mode of worship? Will it gain the power to provide living witness to the eternal commands, for men in a nuclear age?

The Islamic perspective regarding these issues (The Ahmadiyya viewpoint and commitment, in particular) is to struggle to restore faith in and worship of the God that made us, so that the objectives of life are fulfilled. Those objectives specifically are:

(1) To instruct man as to his source and furnish him with correct knowledge concerning his Maker so he will not remain ignorant of the object of his existence.

(2) To provide man with a complete code of rules of moral conduct.

(3) To provide a solution for the social problems which confront mankind, and

(4) To explain what happens to man after his death.

Islam provides the methods to solve the conflicts between the religious and secular schools of thought. Allah says:

"...For each of you we prescribed a clear spiritual law and a manifest way in secular matters..." (5:49).

In this verse Allah makes it clear that He has appointed two clear

ways, one pertaining to spiritual and the other to secular matters.

Islam is a religion that governs all aspects of life; the relation of man to God; different stages of moral qualities; relations between the rulers and the ruled; power and duties of the state; relations between the rich and the poor, the power and authority of officials; international relations, relations between the followers of different religions, relations between husband and wife, and so on.

Islam recognizes for all men, the free and unrestricted right to worship God in a place of worship of their choice. Allah says

“And who is more unjust than he who prohibits the name of Allah being glorified in Allah’s temples and strives to ruin them?...” (2:115).

This verse reflects Islam’s attitude regarding religious tolerance and broad-mindedness.

Difference, or the right to differ, lies at the root of all knowledge, inquiry, investigation, research and progress. While we must strive to safeguard the right to differ, to question, and on occasion, even to protest, we must at the same time strive to insure that our differences, in every sphere—religious, scientific, social, economic, political, and within the family, should act and react beneficently and not destructively.

I have attempted to cover only some of the Western character—its ideas, views and customs within different spheres. I have, as well, presented Islam’s position and teachings on the same.

Since an individual, as well as a nation’s future depends on its capacity for self-renewal, let us pray that the West might take a look at Islam, adopt it, and use it as a vehicle in its precarious journey into the future.



WHAT IS ISLAM?

Islam means *peace, surrender*. The significance of the name Islam is the attainment of a life of perfect peace and eternal happiness through complete surrender to the Will of God.

Absolute and uncompromising belief in One God is the central doctrine of Islam. *There is none worthy of worship but the One and Only God (Allah) Who possesses all excellences and Muhammad is His Messenger*. This is the most important doctrine of Islam.

Islam helps us to establish a permanent relationship with God to realize Him during our earthly life as our Helper and Guide in all our affairs.

Islam requires belief in all the prophets and spiritual guides including Abraham, Moses, Jesus, Krishna, Buddha, Confucius and Zoroaster. Islam represents the completion of the mission of *all the prophets from the dawn of history*. It teaches that *all the prophets of God came with one and the same mission*. Thus Islam establishes peace and unity between all religions.

The Holy Quran—the Muslim Scripture—was revealed to the Master Prophet Muhammad 1400 years ago and has been preserved intact without the slightest change. A large number of Muslims know the whole Book by heart. It is an inexhaustible treasure of spiritual truths capable of satisfying the needs of all people in all countries and all stations of life.

The establishment of true democracy and universal brotherhood without any discrimination of caste, creed, color or country is the unique and unrivalled distinction of Islam. Islam has fulfilled and realized the splendid principles of democracy in the actual life and action of human society.

According to Islam, life after death is a continuation of life on earth. Heaven and Hell begin right in this life. Heaven is eternal and everlasting, while hell is temporary. Hell is a hospital for the treatment of the human soul. As a soul is cured, it goes to Heaven. Heaven is the attainment of a life of everlasting progress and complete joy and happiness through union with God and by the development of the fine spiritual qualities and the unlimited capacities which have been implanted in human beings.

A few of the distinctive features of Islam are:

1. Liberation of women by establishing the equality of both sexes, safeguarding their rights and liberties and raising their status.
1. Absolute veto on all intoxicants.
3. Equitable solution of all economic problems.
4. Furnishing mankind with the noblest practical ethics.
5. Promotion of science and education.

Some of the obligatory duties laid down by Islam are:

1. Five daily Prayers.
2. Fasting in the month of Ramadhan.
3. Paying *Zakat* for the relief of poverty.
4. Pilgrimage to Mecca, once in one's lifetime, if circumstances allow.

THE AHMADIYYA MOVEMENT

The Ahmadiyya Movement was founded in 1889 by Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, the expected world Reformer and the Promised Messiah. The Movement is an embodiment of true and real Islam. It seeks to unite mankind with its Creator and to establish peace throughout the world. The present Head of the Movement is Hazrat Mirza Tahir Ahmad. The Ahmadiyya Movement has its Headquarters at Rabwah, Pakistan, and is actively engaged in missionary work at the following centers:

AHMADIYYA MUSLIM MISSIONS

AFRICA:

BENIN: P.O. Box 69, Portonova.
GAMBIA: P.O. Box 383 Banjul. Tel. 608
GHANA: P.O. Box 2327, Accra (OSU New Estates). Tel: 76845
IVORY COAST: Ahmadiyya Muslim Mission, 03 BP 416, Adjame-Abidjan 03.
KENYA: P.O. Box 40554, Nairobi (Fort Hall Road.). Tel: 264226. Telex: cfo 22278.
LIBERIA: P.O. Box 618, Monrovia (9 Lynch Street).
MAURITIUS: P.O. Box 6 (Rose Hill).
NIGERIA: P.O. Box 418, Lagos (45 Idumagbo Avenue). Tel: 633 757.
SIERRA LEONE: P.O. Box 353, Freetown, Tel: 40699/22617
SOUTH AFRICA: Mr. M.G. Ebrahim, P.O. Box 4195, Cape Town (Darut-Tabligh-Il Islami).
TANZANIA: P. O. Box 376, Dares Salaam (Libya Street). Tel: 21744
UGANDA: P.O. Box 98, Kampala.
ZAMBIA: P.O. Box 32345, Lusaka.

AMERICAS:

CANADA: Ahmadiyya Muslim Mission, 1306 Wilson Ave., Downsview, Ont. M3M 1H5. Tel: (416) 249-3420
GUYANA: Ahmadiyya Muslim Mission, 198 Oronoque and Almond Streets, P.O. Box 736, Georgetown. Tel: 02-67634
SURINAM: Ahmadiyya Muslim Mission, Ephraimswegenweg, 26 P.O. Box 2106, Paramaribo.
TRINIDAD & TOBAGO: Freeport Mission Road, Upper Carapichaima, Trinidad, W.I.
U.S.A.: 2141 Leroy Pl. N.W., Washington, DC 20008. Tel: (202) 232-3737. Cable: ISLAM.

AUSTRALIA:

Dr. Ijazul Haque, 19 Brom Borrough Road, Roseville 2069 N.S.W., Sydney.

ASIA:

BANGLADESH: 4 Baxi Bazar Road, Dacca-1.
BURMA: 191-28th Street, Rangoon.
FIJI: P.O. Box 3758, Samabula (82 Kings Road), Suva. Tel: 38221
INDIA: Darul Masih, Qadian. Tel: 36.
INDONESIA: Jalan Balikpapan 1, No. 10, Djakarta Pusat 1/13. Tel: 36 5342
JAPAN: Ahmadiyya Center, 643-1 Aza Yamanoda, O-Aza Issha, Idaka-cho, Meito-Ku, Nagoya 465, Tel. 703-1868
PAKISTAN: (Headquarters) Rabwah, Distt. Jhang.
PHILIPPINES: Haji M. Ebbah, Simunal, Bongao, Sulu.
SINGAPORE: 111 Onan Rd., Singapore 15.
SRI LANKA: Colombo M.E.M. Hasan, 24 San Sebastin Street, Ratnum Road, Colombo 12.

EUROPE:

BELGIUM: Maulvi S. M. Khan, 76 Av. du Pantheon Bte 5 1080, Brussels.
DENMARK: Eriksminde Alle 2, Hvidovre-Copenhagen. Tel: 753502
GERMANY: Die Moschee, Babenhauser, Landstrasse, 25, Frankfurt. Tel: 681485.
HOLLAND: De Moschee, Oostduinlaan, 79, Den Haag. Tel: (010-3170) 245902 Telex: 33574 Inter NLA 30C
NORWAY: Ahmadiyya Muslim Mission, Frognerveine 53, Oslo-2. Tel. 447188
SPAIN: Mission Ahmadiyya del Islam, Mezquita Basharat, Pedro Abad, near Cordoba, Tel. 160750 Ext. 142
SWEDEN: Nasir Moske Islams Ahmadiyya Forsamling, Tolvskillingsgatan 1. S-414 82 Goteborg, Sverige. Tel: 414044
SWITZERLAND: Mahmud Moschee, 323, Forschstrasse 8008, Zurich. Tel: 535570. Telex: 58378 MPTCH Islam 374XA
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